

# **Protecting Our Students in Schools Act**

## ***End Corporal Punishment in Schools***

**Introduced by:** Rep. Suzanne Bonamici (OR) and Sen. Chris Murphy (CT)

### **The Problem**

Every day in 23 states across the country students are at risk of corporal punishment or physical pain as a form of discipline. This egregious practice can result in serious physical injury, including abrasions, broken bones, bruising, hematomas, and other medical complications, and it can cause damaging long-term outcomes. Research has linked the practice in schools to poor academic performance, physical and emotional harm, and damage to students' self-esteem and their trust with educators.

Corporal punishment is disproportionately applied to boys, students of color, and students with disabilities. Data from the U.S. Department of Education demonstrates that Black students are 2.3 times more likely to be subjected to corporal punishment than white students. Additionally, students with disabilities are struck at higher rates than students without disabilities. Students served under IDEA represent 13.2 percent of the student population but make up 16.5 percent of all students who are corporally punished. Many states have failed to end this corporal punishment in our nation's schools, subjecting their students to continued harm. Federal leadership is desperately needed to end this practice for good.

### **The Solution**

The bicameral ***Protecting our Students in Schools Act of 2023***, legislation with broad support across the education and civil rights communities, achieves two critical goals: ending the draconian practice of inflicting physical pain on students in schools and providing schools with the support necessary to create more nurturing and inclusive learning environments that employ restorative, evidence-based practices to improve school safety.

The ***Protecting our Students in Schools Act of 2023*** would prohibit the practice of corporal punishment in any school that receives federal funding and would establish a series of important and much-needed enforcement protections for students and families.

Specifically, the bill:

- Prohibits the practice of corporal punishment in any school that receives federal funding;
- Establishes numerous enforcement protections, including a private right of action, the involvement of the Attorney General of the United States and the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights, and a series of rigorous reporting requirements for states and school districts;
- Invests in states and school districts by establishing a grant program to improve school climate and culture by implementing positive, proactive measures, including positive behavioral interventions and supports, trauma-informed care, restorative justice interventions, implicit bias training, multi-tiered system of supports, culturally responsive teaching, and more to reduce exclusionary and aversive discipline practices.